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# Jean Piaget Society 2022 Conference

Posted on behalf of the Jean Piaget Society

## The 51st Meeting of the Jean Piaget Society, June 2-4

Jean Piaget Society is excited to bring you more information about their June 2022 conference in Philadelphia, PA, USA. From its inception, the Jean Piaget Society (JPS) has cultivated deep thinking about big ideas. JPS pride themselves on the philosophically-rich conceptual inquiry that their conferences and publications engender concerning the nature of knowledge and its development. Central to this inquiry is Piagetian constructivism, a framework that was recently celebrated (along with the 50th anniversary) in the 2021 virtual conference held this past June. Conceptualizations of knowledge and development that align with a Piagetian constructivist perspective are posing increasingly prominent and influential challenges to orthodox thinking across a variety of disciplines—most notably in cognitive science, the neurosciences, and evolutionary biology/psychology. Some of these challenges explicitly acknowledge their conceptual indebtedness to Piagetian thinking; others do not. Take, for example, the current challenge to orthodox ("neo-Darwinian") evolutionary theory that has arisen in evolutionary biology via an "extended evolutionary synthesis." Such a challenge explicitly embraces the idea of organisms as active constructors of their own environments, co-directing their own development and evolution through their activity in, and active commerce with, the world.

In this era of stunning advances in neural and genetic biotechnologies that seem to continuously emphasize biological determinants of psychological characteristics, it is more important than ever to remember Piaget's constructivist understanding and not lose sight of the fact that evolution and biology will never satisfactorily explain children's thinking. Only a focus on developmental processes—on an organism actively

engaging its world—could yield adequate explanations for the behaviors we observe. This focus requires understanding how sociocultural factors—along with other environmental factors—work together with biology to drive development.

JPS philosophically-rich tradition of conceptual inquiry will be on full display in this year's (2022) upcoming conference devoted to "putting development back into evolution," to be held in Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A. from June 2 until June 4. Evolutionary theory has long informed developmental theorizing, but the reverse hasn't always been the case, especially throughout much of the 20th century when many scientific disciplines demonstrated almost unwavering fealty to the genocentric "modern synthesis" of Darwinian natural selection and Mendelian genetics. The conference this year is designed to return both the organism and its development to center stage in discussions of the relations between individual development and species evolution—and to invite substantive reappraisal of what an evolutionary theory that takes development seriously should look like. The plenary addresses for the conference will include: 1) **Anne Sophie Meincke** of the University of Vienna, speaking on how to reconceptualize development and evolution in terms of a process philosophy; 2) **Scott F. Gilbert** of Swarthmore College, speaking on the centrality of developmental process to evolutionary change from the perspective of evolutionary developmental biology; 3) **Denis M. Walsh** of the University of Toronto, speaking on the organism as an adaptive agent of evolutionary change; and 4) **Eva Jablonka** of Tel Aviv University and the London School of Economics and Political Science, speaking on how to reconceptualize the traditional divide between "biological" and "cultural" evolution. The conference will also feature invited symposium topics on 1) "Rethinking Genetics, Epigenetics and Inheritance," chaired by **David S. Moore** of Pitzer College and Claremont Graduate University; 2) "Developmental Psychobiological Systems Theory," chaired by **Robert Lickliter** of Florida International University; 3) "Historical Links between Developmental and Evolutionary Thought," chaired by **Jeremy Burman** of the University of Groningen; and 4) "Development within Multi-Dimensional Complex Systems: Evolutionary Processes, Individual Development and Participation in Cultural Practices," chaired by **Carol Lee** of Northwestern University.

In an environment where prices spike daily, JPS works hard to keep registration fees reasonable. For regular members, the registration fee is $275 USD. Additionally, JPS is offering a reduced rate of $145 USD for students and a 50% reduction in all fees for residents of certain countries/regions (based on World Bank categories). You can find more information by visiting the conference website. To register for the conference, you must become a member. To become a JPS member, you need to make an account on the JPS membership site; once you have an account you can become a member.

We are still in the midst of grappling with the pandemic, and institutional, international, and local rules make planning for and traveling internationally, much less locally, a nearly impossible feat (especially with the conference less than 2 weeks away). While hesitancies and hinderances continue, JPS is moving forward and excited about having an in-person conference with as many of you all who will be able to attend.

Best,
The Jean Piaget Society